1: Gestalde--692 E-8 (1959-1964) 1967 SH6 Yahgan SH6

/964 cont./

423 opposition for a long time has led to absolutely no result, the
965 Yamana have never given up their exclusive legal claim to their
777 native region.

They trace this claim back to their so-called revolutionary
423 myth, which tells that in ancient times the women who were play-
173 ing kina pushed into this region and continued their secret cere-
mony here. Since this time, they say, all the Yamana have re-
mained in one and the same place, and inasmuch as they were
the first to take possession of this land for themselves, it has be-
come their property.

423 The nature of the landscape has divided the whole Yamana
635 territory into five large districts in which an equal number of dia-
lects have developed (p. 189 /unrevised/). Each dialect group
regards its home as, in a special sense, the common property of
all its members. It is the field in which each one may devote him-
self to the hunt for food without restraint. To begin with, the
individual has no vested right to a specific animal and no priority
in obtaining special products of the land. Without discrimination,
everything within the boundaries of the dialect region is available
to everyone living there. Thus, with regard to the natural prod-
ucts of their circumscribed homeland, there is no personal prop-
erty right; this becomes valid only at the moment when a person
appropriates something for himself.

423 It is no less important to point out that only the members
635 of the same dialect group may take what their circumscribed
685 area /965/ holds. Persons whose homes are in a neighboring
district generally do not have the right to cross the boundaries. A
few exceptional cases are regarded as legally valid. If these ex-
ceptions are misused, however, disputes may be kindled and, to
be sure, precisely because of violation of the sovereign rights
which only the actual owners of this region enjoy. They alone
may indiscriminately appropriate in it whatever they need in the
way of animals and goods, even if some of it serves in barter with
people of another group.

It is obvious that every individual will defend the common
possessions of his dialect group, to which he belongs by birth or
marriage and in which he himself has a share. Whenever and
wherever he observes encroachment by a neighbor, he at least
disapproves of it and speaks of it to others in his immediate

/1345 cont./
transformation of the people taking part, for it was a struggle between men and women for existence or nonexistence (297).

297. There is justification for a brief reference here to the surprisingly complete agreement between the basic ideas of the origin myth and those underlying the secret men's ceremonies of the Selk'nam (Vol. I, 859), Yamana, and Halakwulup. All three are juxtaposed in Gusinde (q):261. Cf. the summary in Schmidt (d):285.

Another familiar idea should be repeated here: Under the leadership of the women who performed the Kina, the families immigrated from the north to Beagle Channel, which at that time was unpopulated. They were the first settlers here. The Yamana refer to this as the basis for their legal claim to the region, and they have occupied it since then as the sole owners (p.855). The text of the two versions given above differs in details and in minor incidents. Naturally, all mature men who have personally experienced the Kina are acquainted with the basic ideas of this origin myth, and it is also familiar to a number of women, as will be further explained and shown below.

4. The Daily Program

To this day the Yamana men feel justified in assembling in the Great Hut and celebrating the Kina, while excluding the women as a matter of principle. They definitely maintain that in former times the women, for their part, kept all the men in subjection by means of the same celebration. Hence, they say, their action is an absolutely fitting retaliation for all that was once carried on in exactly the same way by the group of women. The men regard the content of the origin myth in all seriousness as true and reliable; they base their vindication upon it. While the esteem that the men have for the women in everyday life is not basically altered and the social position of every woman is a